The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor concerning in the industrial, economic and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WHOLE NO. 1675 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, MAY 18, 1943 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 33, NO. 20

WE PLEDGE—
1 BILLION DOLLARS
WAR SAVINGS BONDS
FOR VICTORY

FACING the FACTS
With PHILIP PEARL

The current attempt of the reactionary bloc in Congress to turn back the clock 30 years in labor-industry relations in the midst of a war emergency has drawn fire from the Government as well as from labor.

And no wonder!

The seven Government agencies which joined in a round-robin letter to Speaker Rayburn condemning the Connally-Smith Bill are charged with important duties involving the conduct of the war. They cannot afford to let legislative tinkerers who don't know what it's all about cripple the war effort on the home front.

It is not going too far to suppose that these Government agencies took their united action only after receiving the approval and authority of President Roosevelt. They are not in the habit of addressing bitter protests to Congress on their own hook.

The Connally-Smith Bill is a mongrel. It passed the Senate as a measure merely dealing with plants which have been taken over by the Government after a strike. A practically new bill was substituted in the House Military Affairs Committee. This was the notorious Smith Bill which was passed by the House during the coal strike two years ago but has since been buried in the Senate Labor Committee.

Thus, it becomes obvious that the Connally-Smith Bill is just an attempt by House reactionaries to force Fascist legislation down the throat of the Senate.

Who Shall Judge?

The question before Congress now is this:—who is better qualified to judge what action is necessary or unnecessary to further the war production effort, Congressman Smith and his reactionary gang or President Roosevelt and the leaders of our armed forces?

Will Congress follow the advice of a dairy farmer from Virginia who has conducted a perennial feud against labor or the advice of Donald Nelson, chairman of the War Production Board and a leading industrialist before he volunteered his services to his country.

No measure such as the Connally-Smith Bill would have a chance of adoption in normal times, when things are running smoothly. It is only when a situation like a threatened war strike of the coal miners inflames the public mind that vengeful, retaliatory legislation can gain any support. But what of the millions of American workers who have remained steadfastly on the job and have rendered yeoman service to their country in time of dire need? Are they to be kicked in the face just because of resentment against John L. Lewis?

In this connection, a paragraph from the letter of the Government agencies to Speaker Rayburn seems especially pertinent. It says:

"The bill contains numerous restrictive provisions, including injunctions and criminal penalties. At the same time, it impliedly recognizes the propriety of strikes after a 30-day notice and a secret ballot. In both these respects the bill runs squarely counter to the declaration in the Act of Congress that the unconditional no-strike agreement entered into by industry and labor with the President immediately after Pearl Harbor."

Vote Them Out.

This statement puts the finger on the weakness of the argument of the bill's proponents that it would further the war production drive. On the contrary, Donald Nelson and his associates make no secret of their fears that the measure, if adopted, would seriously impede war production and "would impair the effectiveness of the existing machinery for the orderly settlement of labor disputes."

Under the circumstances, liberal and progressive Americans can well join in the warning addressed by the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor to the supporters of this bill.

"We realize," said the Council, "that the Connally-Smith Bill is but another of the ugly progeny of fascism in disguise.

"Regardless of whether it is killed or adopted, we shall endeavor to vote out of office any member of Congress who supports it."

This is the only kind of language some members of Congress can understand. It is the kind of action that apparently must be taken at least once in a generation to teach our lawmakers respect for the wishes of the people of our country whom they are elected to represent.

The Executive Council pointed out what happened to members of the Senate who voted for the confirmation to the Supreme Court of a federal judge who had upheld "yellow dog" contracts. Within 10 years, every one of them was swept out of office.

Do Mr. Smith and his cronies wish to invite the same fate for themselves?

Executive Council Opens War On Connally-Smith Bill; Seven Gov't War Agencies Also Hit Fascist Measure; AFL No-Strike Pledge Is Unanimously Reaffirmed

Compact With Government Stands Intact, Supported by Loyal Workers, Council Declares

Washington, D. C.—Opening its Spring session in the nation's capital, the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor issued a sweeping and unanimous reaffirmation of labor's no-strike pledge.

Regardless of the actions of others, this solemn compact with the Government stands intact today, "supported by the good faith and high resolve of every American Federation of Labor worker," the Council declared.

No matter how sharply AFL members may disagree with wartime restrictions upon labor, the no-strike pledge holds good for them and for their unions which will not authorize or approve a work stoppage "until the enemies of America have been crushed into final defeat," the Council stated.

The text of the Council's declaration follows:

"The smashing victory of the United Nations in North Africa and the fact that new offensives against the Axis forces are now being undertaken on all fronts constitute the best evidence that America has won the basic battle of production.

"Without the assurance of overwhelming superiority in the weapons of warfare, these drives toward ultimate victory could not have been undertaken.

"Great gains are breath-taking. Seventeen months ago America was practically defenseless. We had no modern guns or tanks, our few fighting planes were obsolete, our Navy had been crippled by a single, treacherous raid at Pearl Harbor.

"Today, President Roosevelt reports that America is producing more fighting planes than all the enemy nations combined; Secretary of the Navy Knox announces that virtually an entire new navy was launched in the first few months of this year; merchant ships are sliding down the ways at a rate never before approached in shipbuilding history; a virtual avalanche of guns, tanks and ammunition, unsurpassed in quality, is pouring forth from American factories. Production has reached such staggering quantities that Donald Nelson acknowledges there is no further need of expanding plant capacity.

"The Executive Council congratulates the six million members of the American Federation of Labor whose hard work, untiring skill and patriotic devotion to duty have helped to make these glorious production achievements possible.

"We take pride in the fact that this Executive Council originally spoke some of the no-strike pledge which served as the inspiration and guide for American soldiers of production in their long and sustained drive to make our nation the arsenal of democracy.

"But even more gratifying has been the loyal and unswerving fulfilment of this pledge by the members of the American Federation of Labor during a period of abnormal economic pressure and hardships.

"The Executive Council considers it timely and important to emphasize now that the no-strike pledge was made for the duration. It was given as labor's contribution to victory. This solemn compact with the Government and people of America was made in good faith and the high resolve of every American Federation of Labor worker. It must be maintained in letter and in spirit until this war is won.

"In reaffirming our no-strike pledge at this time, the Executive Council wishes the American people to understand that we regard it as a valid and unqualified obligation upon our part, come what may. No matter how sharply the members of the American Federation of Labor may disagree with wartime restrictions that have been imposed upon labor, the no-strike pledge holds good for them. No strike will be authorized or approved by the American Federation of Labor and its affiliated unions until the enemies of America have been crushed into final defeat."

Allied Military Leaders Hail Workers' Aid To War Effort

Allied Headquarters in North Africa.—Devotion of American workers to the task of producing modern fighting weapons won the praises of President Roosevelt and American and French military commanders in the North African war zone as American-made equipment was formally transferred to the soldiers of France.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower, commanding general, Allied forces in this theater, and General Henri Honore Giraud, civilian and military commander-in-chief, French North Africa, lauded munitions workers, stressing the importance of American labor's contribution to the defeat of the Axis in Tunisia.

General Eisenhower said:

"Supplementing vital equipment delivered to the valiant French forces from British and American armies during the Tunisian campaign, this equipment is the result of American and small portion of that already here and coming—has been produced by the sacrifice and patriotism of American whose millions of men, women and children have joined with their fighting and their hearts in this great war for human freedom."

President Roosevelt's message, read by General Eisenhower, follows:

"American workers, whose labor is devoted to turning out arms and military equipment for the defenders of our common cause, ask only that the fruits of their labor be placed in the hands of those imbued with the determination to use them to their full extent. The formal transfer today of arms and equipment to our gallant French allies will be a matter of encouragement to those workers and of keen satisfaction to every American. Our soldiers look forward to the days ahead when the weapons being transferred today and those being forged in ever greater quantities, will be in their hands and in those of our Allies, to complete the task of crushing from the common enemy until final victory is won."

General Giraud, who responded for the French, said that "the pledge that was made at Anfa by the President of the United States and the British government has been fulfilled. The convoys are arriving."

Then, he added:

"The news is spreading through the country and among the troops and fighters with comfort and joy. Today's ceremony, simple and great, allows us to express our gratitude to the workmen in America who have wrought that precious material and brought it into action to help in the conquest of liberty in the world. This ceremony asserts our common will to win the war."

DEFERMENT OF FIREMEN DEMANDED BY RICHARDSON

Chicago, Ill.—George H. Richardson, secretary-treasurer of the International Association of Fire Fighters, declared in an address to the convention of the National Fire Protection Association that peace-time standards for fire-fighting personnel should be maintained and "to cope with the perils of incendiary fire protection," induction of the nation's firemen into the armed services should be halted immediately.

Mr. Richardson asserted that until the Selective Service System has revised to defer firemen, 43 per cent of the country's professional firemen will be drafted in the next few months. He said that "this is not conceived as a means through which employment may be found in the industry could have a common meeting place to solve production problems. It has filled that role excellently and has made a very great contribution to our whole war production program.

Reports from the Labor-Management Production Committees on the progress of their activities which they have engaged indicate the sincerity and realism with which they have tackled the greatest production task any nation ever faced. They have squarely met their problems in their individual plants and have worked out programs whereby labor and management could work together to overcome them."

Principal activities of these committees, Mr. Nelson said, consist of organizing suggestion systems, informational and morale-building programs, conservation of materials, safety programs, transportation of workers, absenteeism campaigns and general consideration of production problems.

The major accomplishments, he said, are indicated by War Production Drive Headquarters' first labor-management activities survey, after a year of operation. Analysis is based on reports received in Washington to date from 800 out of 2,000 committees now being formed. These 800 committees represent close to two million workers, or approximately 40 per cent of the workers employed in the plants where Labor-Management Production Committees are set up.

COMPANY MUST BARGAIN WITH THREE AFL UNIONS

Washington, D. C.—The National War Labor Board announced that it had unanimously sustained a directive order of the Sixth Regional War Labor Board directing the Austin Co. of Chicago, Ill., to bargain collectively with three AFL unions designated as bargaining agents in elections held by the regional board.

The Austin Co., a construction engineering firm currently building an airplane assembly plant in Georgia, does not come within the jurisdiction of the National Labor Relations Act and refused to recognize or bargain with the three unions—the Miscellaneous Warehousemen, Local Union 781, of the A. F. of L. Teamsters Union; the Technical Engineers, Architects and Draftsmen's Union, Local 205, and the General Service Employes' Union, Local 73. The regional board conducted an election according to NLRB procedure and certified the three unions. The NWLB upheld the regional board's order because the plant under construction is vitally needed for the war program, which made imperative the speedy settlement of the dispute.

Federation Warns Labor Will Vote Out of Office Those Who Support Vicious Bill

Washington, D. C.—Launching a militant offensive against the Fascist Connally-Smith anti-labor bill, the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor warned that the workers of America will vote out of office any member of Congress who supports this measure.

Immediately following this action, seven top Government war agencies denounced the Connally-Smith Bill in a round-robin letter to Speaker Rayburn. They charged it would expose "bitterness, rancor and labor strife" and impede the nation's war effort.

James G. Patton, president of the National Farmers Union, joined in the onslaught with a message to both houses of Congress declaring the effect of such legislation would destroy stabilized labor relations in war industries.

The Government agencies which assailed the "lynch labor" bill included the War and Navy Departments, the War Production Board, the Labor Department, the War Labor Board, the Maritime Commission and the National Labor Relations Board.

In its declaration against the bill, the AFL Executive Council said:

"The surest way to hamstring America's war effort and to destroy the morale of the nation's soldiers of production is for Congress to enact the obnoxious Connally-Smith Bill.

"This measure, if enacted into law, will wreck the war production program. It will wipe out the many benefits that have been derived from the operation of labor's voluntary no-strike pledge. It will be as unenforceable as prohibition.

"How can American workers join wholeheartedly in a war for the preservation of freedom when their own freedoms are being cut out from under them? How can American workers believe in the sincerity of America's war against Fascism, when Fascist legislation is being imposed against them?

"The provisions of the Connally-Smith Bill do not add up to a just and equitable law. They constitute a club—a vengeful weapon aimed at all American workers in retaliation for the acts of a few. American workers will not and cannot subject themselves to such tyranny.

"Free labor in America is the enemy of oppression. Long before this war broke out, the American Federation of Labor recognized the dangers of Italian Fascism, German Nazism and Japanese aggression, and condemned them without reservation. When America entered the war against these natural enemies, we of the American Federation of Labor determined to do our utmost to defeat the forces of oppression arrayed against us.

"The American Federation of Labor hereby serves notice that it will combat with equal determination the Fascist forces at work in our own country who are trying to take advantage of the war emergency to enslave and stultify free American labor.

"We realize that the Connally-Smith Bill is but another of the symptoms of growing Fascism in America. It is backed by a reactionary group in Congress, composed of members of both major political parties, who have committed repeated acts of aggression against American labor.

"The American Federation of Labor calls upon Congress to defeat the Connally-Smith Bill. We will demand a record vote on this measure. Regardless of whether it is killed or adopted, we shall endeavor to vote out of office any member of Congress who supports it. Into this effort, the American Federation of Labor will put every resource at its command.

"It may be recalled that some years ago the American Federation of Labor undertook a similar campaign against members of the United States Senate who voted for confirmation to the Supreme Court of a federal judge who had upheld 'yellow-dog contracts.' This appointee was not confirmed, but the American Federation of Labor did not rest content with those Senators who voted for him. Within 10 years not a single one of them remained in the United States Senate.

"We trust that the members of Congress are cognizant of the fact that the political strength of the American Federation of Labor has increased many times since then."

Progressive Miners' Pact Returns 94 Coal Firms To Private Control

Washington, D. C. — Solid Fuels Administrator Harold L. Ickes directed that the properties of 94 coal companies in Illinois be returned to private operation following an agreement by the International Union, Progressive Mine Workers of America (AFL), that its 40,000 members will not go on strike against these mines.

The no-strike agreement was signed on a new contract through collective bargaining, said contract to be subject to approval of the National War Labor Board.

Hailing Secretary Ickes' action, Mr. Green said:

"The no-strike agreement is eminently satisfactory to the members of the Progressive Mine Workers who have been taken over because the pledge and never intend to. They are determined to go on producing coal for the nation's war needs regardless of the actions of others. Under the circumstances there was no necessity or justification for continued government operation of these mines and I am highly gratified that Secretary Ickes has agreed to return them to private operation.

"I am confident that a fair and just contract can now be arrived at between the Progressive Mine Workers Union and the coal mine operators through collective bargaining in accordance with the principles of industrial democracy."

"These are serious and critical times. Mr. Lyons was a member of the War Manpower Commission, and also a member of the State War Council. Those places cannot be left vacant. All the labor leaders were here for Mr. Lyons' funeral and they agreed this was an opportune time to hold the election."

NAVY PLANES AND WARSHIPS COMPLETED HIT NEW PEAK

Washington, D. C.—Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox revealed that Navy airplane and warship completions in April reached unprecedented levels.

Secretary Knox also disclosed that the number of new vessels of all types except landing craft completed by the Navy during the first four months of this year was equivalent to a 25 per cent increase in the numerical strength of the fleet and its auxiliaries" over January this year.

Combat aircraft delivered to the Navy during April, he said, "ran to four figures for the first time."

Thomas Murray Chosen President Of N. Y. State Labor Federation

New York City.—The executive council of the New York State Federation of Labor named Thomas Murray, for the last seven years head of the Building and Construction Trades Council, to fill the presidency of the federation, vacated by the death of Thomas J. Lyons.

Following a special session of the council at the Hotel Commodore, it was announced that Mr. Murray would complete the unexpired term of his predecessor and be a candidate for re-election at the annual convention of the federation in Buffalo in August.

The council also chose Martin F. Lacey, vice president of the Teamsters District Council of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and Chauffeurs, AFL, to fill the vacancy left on the executive board by the death of Mr. Lyons.

The executive council went into session after attending funeral services for Mr. Lyons in St. Patrick's Cathedral at which labor leaders from the state were present. In explaining the selection of Mr. Murray as federation president so soon after Mr. Lyons' funeral, a spokesman for the council said:

Roosevelt Asks Congress To Provide $400,000,000 More For War Housing

Washington, D. C. — President Roosevelt asked Congress to increase the authorization for war housing by $400,000,000 to provide estimated 1,109,000 workers who are expected to migrate to war jobs in the next fiscal year, which begins July 1.

The President emphasized that it was not the Government's intention to use public funds to house all of these workers, explaining that "we are alarmed at the present tendency to relax the actions of others. Under the circumstances there was no necessity or justification for continued government operation of these mines and I am highly gratified that Secretary Congress under the Lanham act to $1,000,000,000 since October, 1940.

"No expenditure of funds can be too large if that expenditure is necessary to win the war or to win it with a greater economy in time and lives," the President wrote. "But I cannot refrain from pointing out how small a fraction of the cost of the war is involved in the appropriation of the money and use of materials for war housing, particularly when measured against the contribution which the shelter of war workers is making toward the winning of the war.

"If the total outlays for war housing were regarded as part of the cost of the plants and of the things they produce, or the cost of the munitions and war implements which they fabricate, these outlays would shrink to very minor proportions in this proper perspective.

"But the cost of the war effort, its delay and blood and treasure, if decent and sufficient shelter were not provided for those who produce, would be great beyond calculation.

"In view of the urgency of the need for more war housing now, I suggest that the proposed expansion receive the earliest consideration of the Congress."

In an identical letter to Vice President Wallace and Speaker Rayburn the President said that the program now being carried out provides shelter for more than 3,000,000 workers "in intense war production areas" and that the size of the program affords "some measurement of the disastrous impairment of war production that would confront us if war housing were not provided in sufficient volume and on time."

American Airplane Output Exceeds Production Of All Other Nations

Washington, D. C.—President Roosevelt announced that production of airplanes by the United States now exceeds that of all other nations combined, with emphasis being placed on the four-engined bomber to carry out plans for greater offensives against the Axis.

Converting airplane production statistics into the weight of planes instead of their number as a better test of output, the President told his press conference that United States factories turned out 87,000,000 pounds of airplane, by weight, in 1941, 291,000,000 pounds in 1942, and were expected to produce 911,000,000 pounds in 1943 and 1,417,000,000 pounds in 1944.

The President's manner in announcing the production figures reflected his pleasure and his feeling that the release of the information was likely to have a telling effect upon the enemy.

Declaring that our war plans called for this country and its allies to go more and more on the offensive, the President said that the four-engined bomber, a prime attack weapon, now was being produced at a rate of six months ahead of the schedule set in December. The modern four-engined bomber, he said, weighs six times as much as the single-engined fighter plane.

Not only had the number of airplanes produced in this country greatly increased since 1941, he continued, but the type of plane had changed radically. In the beginning, he said, we concentrated on defense airplanes, including fighters, light bombers and dive bombers. Now, he said, our emphasis was on four-engined bombers, two-engined heavy bombers, long-range fighters and large cargo planes.

Nelson Praises Effective Work Of Labor-Management Committees

Washington, D. C.—Chairman Donald M. Nelson announced that the first results of one year's operation of the Labor-Management Production Committees, sponsored by the War Production Drive Headquarters, indicate that this approach to the problem of increasing production is sound and extremely effective."

"In the year in which this plan has been in operation it has made splendid progress," Mr. Nelson said. "It was conceived as a means through which employer and employee in the industry could have a common meeting place to solve production problems. It has filled that role excellently and has made a very great contribution to our whole war production program.

15 Million Jobless After The War Visioned By Major General Fleming

New York City.—Maj. Gen. Philip B. Fleming, Federal Works Administrator, estimated here that a $15,000,000,000 annual postwar outlay for public and private construction will be required to provide employment for about 8,000,000 persons and avoid a postwar depression.

In an address before 850 members of the Advertising Executives Club of New York at the Hotel Roosevelt, General Fleming said he based his unofficial estimates on labor potential figures prepared by a Washington economist.

The economist's figures point to around 15,000,000 persons without jobs after the armistice, he added.

"Our economists believe," said General Fleming, "that immediately after the war about 6,000,000 men and women have to be discharged from such industries as aircraft production, shipbuilding and machine building. Another group of industries, now under the wraps of wartime control, will probably add an additional 1,000,000 workers, leaving a net loss in manufacturing of 8,000,000.

"In addition, it would seem that transportation will have to discharge about 400,000 workers. Two million will lose their jobs in government service—which probably will occasion considerable rejoicing on the part of the taxpayers. Assuming 11,000,000 men in the armed forces, this economist thinks that perhaps 7,400,000 will be discharged after the war, leaving 3,500,000 under arms somewhat longer for police duty in various parts of the world."

Of the 15,000,000 thus estimated, General Fleming assumes that 6,000,000 will retire from the labor market, including women who will return to homemaking. He also assumed that 2,000,000 of the less physically fit will be carried on permanently unemployed, that 2,000,000 will return to agriculture, that 1,000,000 will get jobs in service and finance, that another 1,000,000 will find employment as servants or become self-employed, and that trade will absorb 2,000,000.